

- B.A.
- (ii) a first elastic ring integrally connected with [means for radially stretching] said collar-shaped portion; and
- (b) a second elastic ring, said second elastic ring being removable and adapted for radially stretching said closed end.

REMARKS

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.115 amendment of the application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 through 20 are pending in the application. Claims 1 through 14 and 16 through 18 are deleted with this amendment. Claim 15 is amended.

This Preliminary Amendment presents only claims directed to the female embodiment of the invention. The female embodiment of the invention has an inner ring that is removable in the preferred embodiment. The applicant intends to prosecute broader claim language in subsequent applications. If required to do so, the applicant will submit terminal disclaimers in the future applications to the terminal portion of any patent that extends beyond the terminal portion of any patent resulting from prosecution of the present claims.

The applicant's invention, and in particular the female embodiment of the invention, is both novel and unobvious over the art known to the applicant. None of